

# DIGITAL LEARNING OF ENGLISH BEYOND CLASSROOM: EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

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**Abstract:** The shift of language learning from face-to-face classroom interaction to online learning beyond classroom amidst global pandemic of Covid-19 has changed how teachers and students deal with teaching and learning activities. To address the issue, the present study sheds some light on 71 EFL learners' perception toward digital learning of English beyond classroom and a range of English learning activities in social distancing measures. Drawing on the data from a web-based survey and Focus Group Discussion, the results indicated that the students positively perceived the use of digital technology as a means of language learning amidst the global pandemic. It was also revealed that digital learning of English beyond classroom could potentially be conducted by means of available social networking sites such as Youtube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Google classroom, and Facebook. Some activities using digital learning of English beyond classroom are clearly highlighted. The results of this study contribute to the realm of language teaching in offering some insights for designing beyond classroom activities by augmenting the accessible social networking sites.

**Keywords:** digital learning of English; EFL learners' perception; English activities beyond classroom; social networking sites.

## INTRODUCTION

The global pandemic of Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in the year of 2020 around the world has greatly influenced human

Nugroho, A. & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital learning of English beyond classroom: EFL learners' perception and teaching activities.

behaviors. Almost all government of the countries that have been affected to the spread of this contagious disease call on their society to do social distancing. Social distancing measures are control actions and changes in behavior to avoid infectious disease transmission by decreasing the rates of contact between susceptible individuals and infected individuals who may transmit the disease (Reluga, 2010). In the case of Surakarta Indonesia, the pandemic has affected how human carries out social interaction, including teaching and learning in educational settings. As a result, the activities of teaching in formal education context shift from face-to-face learning inside classroom to online learning outside the classroom by means of digital technology. For ELT researchers, it of course stimulates an idea of examining the efficacy of digital learning of English beyond the classroom.

With the rapid development of technology nowadays, English language teaching (ELT) professionals have freshly started investigating the way EFL learners practice and learn English beyond a formal classroom by means of accessible digital devices and internet resources (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Lee (2019) defines this circumstance as informal digital learning of English (IDLE), which is explained as autonomous learning, self-directed using a variety of digital technologies such as smartphones, social media, and internet sites to learn and practice English. Hitherto, studies have shown that the digital learning of English beyond classroom was significantly linked to higher English proficiency, vocabulary outcomes, and cross-cultural communication (Lee, 2019, Lee, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2019). In this regards, digital devices are likely to contribute to EFL learners' autonomy and offer them a chance for language learning and practice (Nugroho et al., 2020).

To date, previous research examining the implementation of digital learning, or often referred as Social Networking Sites (SNS), have revealed the potential use of some SNS in digital learning of English such as Youtube (Alwehaibi, 2015), WhatsApp (Ahmed, 2019), Instagram (Handayani et al., 2018; Nugroho & Rahmawati, 2020), Google classroom (Al-Marroof & Al-Emran, 2018), and

Facebook (Gatcho & Hajan, 2019). In general, the results of these study indicate that the use of aforementioned social networking sites have successfully enhanced EFL learners' language proficiency. However, the learning activities of English beyond classroom by means some available digital devices in social distancing measures as a result of global pandemic have yet to be empirically investigated. Also, the effectiveness of shifting from inside classroom learning to online learning outside classroom in response to the current phenomenon still remains a mystery, thus it needs an in-depth investigation.

As an attempt to address these gaps, drawing on a descriptive method, the present study aims to examine EFL learners' perception toward the efficacy of digital learning of English activities beyond classroom so as to highlight learning activities of English by means of digital devices in social distancing measures during the global pandemic. To ensure the objectives of this study, two research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What is the EFL learners' perception toward digital learning of English activities amidst the global pandemic?
2. What digital learning activities do EFL learners experience amidst the global pandemic?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In recent years, studies indicate that the use of digital devices in English language teaching enhances EFL learners' motivation, self-confidence, and language productivity (Lin et al., 2016). Blattner and Lomicka (2012) examined the implementation of Social networking site Facebook in an English course and how the learners responded to it. The results showed that the learners perceived positively to the use of Facebook in their English classes, and also considered it as a new tool that assisted them to develop language skills into practice. In another study, Gatcho and Hajan (2019) investigated the potential use of Facebook wall posting to enhance high school students' English productivity. The findings revealed that the use of Facebook wall

Nugroho, A. & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital learning of English beyond classroom: EFL learners' perception and teaching activities.

posting in English class could enhance students' engagement and trigger their interests in language practice. In this study, the social media Facebook also provided EFL learners an opportunity to access other information and sources to deal with cultural knowledge and face-to-face interaction.

With regards to the use of smartphone for language learning, Stockwell (2010) compared the impacts of mobile-assisted-learning platform to PC-based platform on learners' vocabulary outcomes. Based on the results, there was no consistent difference in the learners' scores achieved by two platforms, and it was shown that learning by means of mobile platform took much longer time. Mobile interface and screen size were revealed as the factors of longer time needed to finish learning activities using this platform. By the time, a contrary results was found by Ahmed (2019) who concluded that mobile application WhatsApp was an effective social networking site to assist EFL learners language practices. This study further revealed that EFL learners reacted positively to the use of mobile-phone for language learning. The two previous results indicate that technology has advanced rapidly. The rapid advancement of digital technologies and smartphone, ranging from larger screen sizes, higher resolution, increased internet networks through 3G, 4G, 5G or Wi-fi, to larger capacity memory cards offers a new opportunity to develop EFL learners' self-confidence and learning autonomy, even in outside classroom.

More recently, Lee and Drajeti (2019) investigated how informal digital learning of English (IDLE) associated with EFL learners' proficiency. The results suggested that the quality of IDLE activities significantly enhanced learners' language productivity. In Indonesian context, Handayani et al. (2018) examined the use of mobile application Instagram to teach EFL learners' writing skills. The results clearly indicated that Instagram is a meaningful and effective platform to improve the learners' ability of writing. In another study, Hidayati and Diana (2019) evaluated the features of smart mobile devices to enhance Indonesian EFL learners' motivation for learning a

language. The results pointed out that the learners were considerably active in their practices by using the mobile devices. In a further explanation, this study indicated that smart mobile devices were promising to foster autonomous English learning beyond a formal classroom.

ELT professionals have recently begun to investigate the potential use of social networking sites to facilitate EFL learners' self-practice inside and outside classroom (Lee, 2020). Published results in this area in general indicate that digital technologies and mobile devices, if used properly, can enhance EFL learners' engagement and motivation, facilitate them to do more practices, and foster their learning autonomy (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Zhang, 2020). However, the literature has still been silent on investigating the efficacy of digital learning activities of English in the age of the global pandemic. Therefore, in light of the aforementioned discussion, the present study aims to fill the gaps by examining EFL learners' perception toward the efficacy of digital devices use to learn English outside the classroom. This study further portrays online learning activities of English by using digital technologies beyond the formal classroom.

## **METHOD**

A descriptive qualitative approach was employed to shed some light on the students' perception and attitudes toward the potential use of digital learning of English and online teaching activities beyond classroom. As in a qualitative research, contextualization is a crucial matter since the data were interpreted only in the context of English language setting where the data were obtained (Yin, 2015). Hence, the current study deals with the accuracy of the situation being studied instead of the generalization.

A total of 71 Indonesian English as foreign language learners (male,  $n = 28$ , 39,5%; female,  $n = 43$ , 60,5%) from one public university in Surakarta Central Java province were involved in this study. Their average age was 19, consisting of freshman ( $n = 53$ , 74,6%) and

sophomores (n = 18, 25,4%). They must have been experienced digital learning of English beyond classroom since it was officially required by the authority in response to the global pandemic of covid-19, even some of them confessed that they have adapted with digital learning for years. They have also obtained English lesson such as reading, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, writing, and listening.

### *Instruments*

Both a web-based survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were administered for data collection. First, a web-based survey with 10 statement items (see table 1) was developed with reference to Rahayu et al. (2017). The survey was slightly modified and administered online by means of Google Forms to gather data from the respondents. The initial part of the survey was the demographic data such as age, gender, the age at which the participant started learning English, phone number, and the information about the length of digital learning experience. The next part of the survey was intended to examine the participants' perception and attitudes toward the use of digital platforms to conduct English learning activities beyond classroom. A 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was utilized to indicate responses in these statement items.

Second, a Focus Group Discussion was conducted to follow up the results of web-based survey. The FGD aimed to reveal learning activities by means of digital technologies beyond classroom experienced by the participants. As in a social distancing, the FGD was administered by means of WhatsApp group. However, the authors guaranteed that it did not reduce the efficacy and quality of the discussion. The participants involved in the FGD were purposively invited with a single requirement. They must represent the diversity of the class with different English teachers. By involving as many as students with different teachers, it would result in various models of learning activities using digital technologies which were conducted outside the classroom. Birmingham and Wilkinson (2003) state that FGD is a data collection technique that provides rich results

and in-depth understanding because the participants can freely interact with each other to deal with the same topic of discussion at the same time. Some questions, i.e. “how do your English teachers carry out digital learning beyond classroom?” and “what kind of digital technology do your English teachers use?” were asked to the participants in the FGD session.

Table 1 Items of Survey

Survey items	Statement
S1	I enjoy learning English through digital technologies beyond classroom
S2	I am more motivated learning English through digital technologies beyond classroom
S3	Learning English through digital technologies helps me understand the materials more easily
S4	Learning English by means of digital technologies beyond classroom enhances my English productivity
S5	Using digital technologies beyond classroom improves my learning efficacy
S6	Digital technologies beyond classroom encourage my autonomous learning
S7	I am delighted to use digital technologies beyond classroom
S8	I am comfortable having learning activities using digital technologies beyond classroom
S9	Learning English with digital technologies beyond classroom is really joyful
S10	Overall, learning English using digital technologies beyond classroom is fruitful for me

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

An invitation to engage in this study along with a link of online Google form, detail instructions on how to fill out and submit the form, and author’s contact information was distributed to the potential participants by means of social media network WhatsApp (Indonesian’s frequently used instant messenger). The online survey was spread to around 119 EFL learners majoring in English department and 71 of them submitted the survey. In the invitation of the survey, the participants were informed that participation in this study was not compulsory. They were also notified that their responses were used for research purpose only. After the data from

online survey were collected, the participants were randomly contacted through phone number written in the demographic data of the survey to participate in the FGD. In the FGD session, eight (8) participants were in and shared their experiences of learning English using digital technologies during the global pandemic.

### *Data Analysis*

The data obtained from the online survey and FGD were analyzed by following some procedures. First, the survey results were calculated in the form of percentage by using Excel program. The percentage was used to indicate the learners' perception and attitudes toward the use of digital technology to conduct learning activities beyond classroom. The Likert scale was computed by finding out the total score per item using the formulation  $T \times P_n$ , in which T is the total of responses and  $P_n$  is the likert score. The maximum score was 355, obtained from the maximal likert score (5)  $\times$  number of participants (71). Moreover, the authors determined the index (the percentage) by dividing the total score with the maximum score then was calculated by 100. Lastly, the index was used as qualification criteria to draw the conclusion that was summarized as follows: 0-20% = strongly disagree, 21-40% = disagree, 41-60% = neutral, 61-80% = agree, and 81-100% = strongly agree.

Second, in light of Creswell's (2009) sequential explanatory, the FGD data were used to further inform the survey data. The data from FGD were primarily arranged and identified based on the answers of the questions. The authors read the transcription several times to get the initial points of learning activities conducted using digital technology during the global pandemic. The data were coded to show the classification and the emerging trends. During the process, the authors removed repeated and unnecessary data. Finally, the excerpts which were relevant to the digital learning activities of English beyond classroom were reported in the result section. To ensure the validity, the two authors reviewed and analyzed the data obtained



from the FGD independently, and continued by stages of discussion to achieve the consensus of the final results.

## **FINDINGS**

This section reports two main themes regarding the EFL learners' perception on the digital learning of English use and their experiences of online learning activities using digital technology during global pandemic. The authors select the most representative quotes from the participants' statements to support the delineation of the findings. We translate some of the utterances into proper English without changing the intention to ensure that the message is smoothly conveyed. The sources of the quotes are provided by writing the participants' initials and numbers (e.g. RK. 01).

### **EFL Learners' Perception on the Use Digital Technology during Online Learning**

In general, all the EFL learners positively perceived the implementation of digital learning of English beyond classroom. As shared by the participants in the online survey, learning English by means of digital technologies not only encouraged their learning efficacy, but could also enhanced their language productivity, and had essential impacts on other aspects of language learning.

As depicted in table 2, all statements of the online survey have been agreed by the participants. They confessed that digital learning of English beyond classroom improved their learning motivation and was enjoyable. It was indicated by the data from table 2, in which the index for statement 1 and 2 were 80.28% and 78.02 respectively. Moreover, the learners also agreed that learning English by means of digital technologies beyond classroom helped them understand the English materials and enhanced their English productivity. The index for the two statements were 79.15% and 78.59 in order.

Based on table 2, it was revealed that digital technologies beyond classroom developed the EFL learners' learning efficacy. It further showed that digital learning of English outside classroom

Nugroho, A. & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital learning of English beyond classroom: EFL learners' perception and teaching activities.

could encourage their autonomous learning. These assertions were proven by the results of data analysis which disclosed that the index for the two statements were 81.12% and 91.26%. It indicated that the learners strongly agreed with the statement number 5 and 6.

Table 2 EFL Learners' perception on the use of digital technology

Items	Responses					Total	Index (%)	Criteria
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
S1	0	6	18	196	65	285	80,28	<i>Agree</i>
S2	0	2	33	212	30	277	78,02	<i>Agree</i>
S3	2	4	21	184	70	281	79,15	<i>Agree</i>
S4	0	14	6	204	55	279	78,59	<i>Agree</i>
S5	0	2	42	144	100	288	81,12	<i>Strongly agree</i>
S6	0	0	3	116	205	324	91,26	<i>Strongly agree</i>
S7	0	0	27	220	35	282	79,43	<i>Agree</i>
S8	3	22	93	92	15	225	63,38	<i>Agree</i>
S9	0	4	57	160	50	271	76,33	<i>Agree</i>
S10	0	0	9	148	155	312	87,88	<i>Strongly agree</i>

Notes: S : Statement SD : Strongly disagree  
D : Disagree N : Neutral  
A : Agree SA : Strongly agree

The results of the online survey also indicated that EFL learners were delighted and comfortable in learning English beyond classroom through digital technologies. The index for the statements were 79.43% and 63.38% respectively. Although it was still agreed by the learners, the statement number 8, which is "the learners are comfortable performing digital technologies beyond classroom", obtained the lowest score among the other statements. It may due to many workloads that should be handled by the participants during social distancing measures. For this issue, a further investigation needs to be conducted.

Furthermore, the EFL learners responded positively toward the idea of learning English by means of digital technologies outside classroom that was joyful and fruitful. It was proven by the results of data analysis gathered from the online survey, which revealed that the index was 76.33% and 87.88%. This result suggested that EFL learners agreed that digital learning of English beyond classroom was joyful. Finally, yet importantly, the learners strongly agreed with the

last statement of the survey in which learning English using digital technologies beyond a formal classroom truly benefited them.

### **Digital Learning Activities of English amidst Global Pandemic**

The data obtained from FGD further supported the results of the online survey. In the FGD, the participants shared their experiences of English learning activities using digital technology during the global pandemic. Some excerpts are selected as representative quotes of the participants' experiences (initials are used to protect privacy).

As regards to the FGD results, some learning activities by means of various social networking sites were shared by the participants. To begin with, a participant in FGD told that during the learning from home period, he and his classmates were learning English especially writing skill by means of Youtube and WhatsApp group. He stated that the teacher sent a video containing of a speech from a famous figure through WhatsApp group, and asked the students to write a summary of the speech in about 250–350 words.

*“During the ‘holiday’, we learned how to write in English through summarizing a speech from a famous figure. The speech is about education policy in western country. Our teacher sends the video in WA group, and we have to submit our writing on the due date” (MKI. 4).*

Similarly, another participant used to experience learning English via Youtube. He was assigned by his teacher to create a short video blog (2-3 minutes) presenting an opinion about the pandemic of covid-19 and things to do to avoid its infection. Afterwards, he posted the video in a Youtube account and sent the link to his teacher to be assessed and given a feedback.

*“I also have experience practicing speaking English using Youtube. Because the collage is free in response to coronaviruses, my speaking teacher give us a project to create a video telling opinion about this case (covid-19 pandemic) and some tips to avoid it. Then, we are asked to post the video in Youtube channel and send the link to the teacher” (MY. 1).*

Nugroho, A. & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital learning of English beyond classroom: EFL learners' perception and teaching activities.

Besides Youtube, the use of WhatsApp in digital learning of English beyond classroom was often experienced by EFL learners. It is because this mobile application becomes the most frequently used social media in Indonesia. One of the participants in FGD said that her English teacher carried out teaching and learning activities by using a WhatsApp group. She added that whenever the teacher gave an assignment through the group, the students had to be ready to provide responses.

*"My English teacher create a WhatsApp group during the social distancing measures. The group is used as a media of delivering materials, giving quiz and assignment, giving feedback, and assessing our works. Since the teacher teaches grammar, she often send us materials about a grammar topic, followed by a quiz or assignment in the form of Google form" (MD. 8).*

Further response was given by another participant. She shared her learning experience using WhatsApp during the global pandemic. She was enrolled in a grammar course and the teacher taught in a different way. Her teacher posted questions in "status feature" as offered by WA mobile application once in three days. Then, she and her classmates had to answer the questions by directly replying the status within the deadline. She added that her teacher responded to students' answer one by one through personal chat.

*"For me, using WhatsApp as medium to conduct learning activities is really interesting. Besides, its practicality, this application offers interactive features, one of them is "status feature". My teacher posts grammar questions in her WA status once in three days and asks us to answer directly by replying the status. Our teacher then corrects the answers and gives us feedback by replying our personal chat. We are freely having consultation and asking some questions to him. It is so beneficial and interesting" (SNP. 6).*

Moreover, a social networking site that had often been experienced by most of the participants was Google classroom. This internet site offers complete and interesting features to conduct an online class as if students and teachers are in a real class. It has been

familiar in the context of modern education since the increase of its utilization, especially in higher education institutions. The participants in FGD, in addition, shared their experiences of learning activities using Google classroom outside the classroom.

*"Most of my online class are conducted by using Google classroom. With this site, the teacher can invite members, post materials, give quiz assignment, have a discussion with students, evaluate students' works, and give score to students. In my reading class, my teacher often stimulates us by giving a series of pictures and asks us to give our opinion about the pictures through comment feature. Then, he gives us a reading passage which is closely related to the pictures and assigns us to read the passage for a while. In some minutes later, he posts questions about the passage through "Classwork menu". We can submit our answers and works in the same platform (Google classroom). The teacher then gives us feedback and score through this internet site" (MAY. 5).*

Another participant also declared that Google classroom is one of the best online platforms to conduct online learning activities. His listening class was carried out by means of this internet site. His teacher posted the listening exercise along with its audio and asked him and his classmates to finish the exercise. The teacher also gave a detail instruction of how to submit the students' works. He further added that the students were required to type their answers in a pdf file and uploaded in the Google classroom through the assignment menu.

*"My listening class is also carried out by using Google classroom. My teacher posts material and audio and let us to answer in word file and upload in the assignment menu. My teacher also evaluates our works and gives score through this Google classroom. I feel enjoy using this source to learn English especially listening, because I can study and do my work in a relax condition from my house. I think this is the best online class tool" (MF. 2).*

In addition to the online learning activities during the global pandemic, a participant in FGD session stated that she learned writing English by means of mobile application Instagram. The topic

of her writing is argumentative essay. Her teacher assigned the students to create an Instagram account and ordered them to follow the teacher's account. Once in a week, her teacher posted several pictures related to current issues and let students to choose one. After that, she and her classmates were assigned to repost the chosen picture along with her opinion in about 1000-2000 characters as a caption in English. Other students were encouraged to do peer feedback by commenting on their friends' writing.

*"The teacher in my writing class uses Instagram as a toll for learning English writing. She asks me and my friends in the class to make an Instagram account and follow her account. My teacher always posts 3-5 pictures in a week and asks us to choose one of them. We need to repost the picture and give our opinion as caption about 1000-2000 characters. I feel very nervous when my teacher asks my friends to give comment and correction to my assignment. I think my friends feel so" (FFA. 7).*

The results of FGD session also revealed that Facebook was a potential social media that could be used to conduct an online learning. This mobile application is one of the most frequently used social media in the world. An interesting experience was shared by a participant in FGD with regards to the use of Facebook outside the classroom. His English teacher invited him and his classmates to join an online classroom community by using a Facebook page. It required a different email, thus according to his information, the teacher asked students to create a new email. Here, teacher and students can connect through virtual chat and ongoing online discussion topics. He added that they can also access materials such as videos, articles, and pdf files.

*"My experience using Facebook as a learning tool is when my English teacher asks me and my friends in class to make a new email and register in Facebook. After that, my teacher send us a request to join an online classroom in Facebook. We can access pictures, videos, comment, etc. My teacher often posts materials and assigns us to understand them. After that we often make a discussion related to the*

*materials via comment. This is a new experience for me because I rarely know people learn online class using Facebook" (ARD. 3).*

To sum up the findings, this study indicates that the participants respond positively toward the use of digital learning of English beyond classroom. As a result, they provide some insights of learning activities by means of some accessible social networking sites such as Youtube, WhatsApp, Google classroom, Instagram, and Facebook. The results imply that English learning activities that are conducted beyond classroom do not decrease the effectiveness and the essence of learning English.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study shows that the EFL learners have a strong belief in the efficacy of digital learning activities of English beyond classroom. Unlike conventional teaching activities, which has been teacher centered, the participants exhibited an awareness of using digital technologies to learn English beyond a formal classroom. This way is an interactive approach to assisting students develop their interest and become autonomous in practicing English using a range of digital devices (Bai & Yuan, 2018). Also, the results indicate the increase of EFL learners' engagement with digital learning of English. Frequent engagement in digital learning of English beyond classroom such as social media and internet sites makes EFL learners become adequately exposed to and thus familiar with independent and autonomous learning (Lee & Drajati, 2019). Consequently, as depicted in the results of this study, EFL learners may keep more positive perceptions toward other varieties of digital learning of English (Zhang, 2020).

As regards to the first research question, this study reveals that EFL learners are highly motivated and enjoyable with digital learning of English. This general picture hints that despite the doubt of Indonesian EFL learners' motivation and autonomy (See Ginting et.al., 2020), most EFL learners in this study show high motivation and interest in using digital technology for language learning process.

Nugroho, A. & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital learning of English beyond classroom: EFL learners' perception and teaching activities.

This finding is similar to the result reported by Derakhshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) that nowadays social networking sites are popular among EFL learners, which can enhance their motivation and suit their needs of interest. However, further researches involving different setting and participants in Indonesian context need to be conducted to confirm the results of this study.

As for the second research question, learning activities beyond classroom could smoothly be conducted by means of accessible social networking sites, i.e. Youtube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Google classroom, and Facebook. Similar to the work of Isbell (2018), the current study also found the potential use of several digital platforms to conduct online informal language learning beyond classroom. The results of this study are further consistent with what have been reported by Lee (2019) that quality of informal digital learning of English activities significantly and positively associates with EFL learners' language productivity, especially vocabulary outcomes. Also, this result confirms the research report of Xodabande (2018) that social networking sites are promising media for language learning autonomy.

To begin with the detail of learning activities by means of social networking sites, this study emphasizes the propitious use of Youtube for language learning. The FGD results reveal that Youtube can be used to teach English and stimulate learner autonomy. Previous researches in this area clearly depict that this video website offers many advantages for language learners (Alwehaibi, 2015; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011). Alwehaibi (2015) found positive gains as a result of integrating Youtube in his classroom instruction. He further recommended that Youtube should be used as a valuable teaching resources in EFL classrooms. Similarly, in the report of Watkins and Wilkins (2011), integrating Youtube both inside and outside classroom can improve conversation and pronunciation skills. Additionally, Youtube videos are potential media as a realia to trigger communicative competence and cultural lessons (Watkins & Wilkins,



2011). These previous findings strengthen the idea of Youtube efficacy for language learning as found in the current study.

Next, our data analysis shows that mobile application WhatsApp offers some features to assist language learning activities. In a more detail, it helps EFL learners develop their English productivity by utilizing its feature such as WA group and WA status. As pointed by Ahmed (2019), WhatsApp is a very effective application to build learners' interest and motivation in learning reading and writing skills. Since this social media is the most popular mobile application in Indonesia, however, this study does not suggest to replace the classroom learning with the use of WhatsApp. Instead, this study aims to highlight the potential use of WhatsApp as a tool for language learning in order to develop EFL learners' awareness and trigger their autonomy. This fruitful effort is also to create a variety of learning styles and help EFL learners to acquire English as a foreign language and communicative competence (Lailiyah & Cahyono, 2017; Slim & Hafedh, 2019; Usha & Kadanakuppe, 2014).

The FGD further examines the use of Instagram as a platform to conduct online language learning activities. The result provides a comprehensive insight for designing learning activities by means of mobile application Instagram. This result, therefore, reinforces the reports of previous researches in the similar area (Al-Ali, 2014; Aloraini, 2018; Anggraeni, 2017; Handayani et al., 2018; Handayani, 2017). Handayani et al. (2018) concluded that Instagram was meaningful and fun as a tool to enhance EFL learners' language efficiency. However, it must be noted that it is necessary to provide peer or teacher feedback as found by this study to avoid negative responses of some students during the implementation of Instagram for language learning. The result of this study is also similar with the work of Khalitova and Gimaletdinova (2016), in which they reveal the efficiency of mobile application Instagram as an online tool for EFL learning environment. From a pedagogical standpoint, EFL teachers are encouraged to use this social networking site as means of

Nugroho, A. & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital learning of English beyond classroom: EFL learners' perception and teaching activities.

facilitating language practices, and as a source of additional input beyond the formal classroom (Aloraini, 2018).

In a similar direction, the study evinces that EFL learners are quite interested in the use of Google classroom for language learning outside classroom. As depicted in the finding, this virtual classroom allows EFL learners and teachers to communicate with each other, view materials, work on quiz and assignment, and engage with resources in work groups. Similar with the result of Iftakhar (2016), this study provides an evidence of the potential use and efficacy of Google classroom in EFL teaching. The result of this study further supports the idea of Al-Marouf and Al-Emran (2018), who state that online or blended learning by means of Google classroom offers many advantages over the conventional teaching style. In this virtual class, EFL learners and teachers experience activities of teaching as if they are in a real classroom (Heggart & Yoo, 2018).

Lastly yet importantly, Islam (2016) delineates how Facebook can be implemented for English language teaching outside classroom. The result depicts that the use of Facebook as a learning tool enhances Bangladeshi EFL learners writing and reading skills. Consistent with the result of Islam (2016), this study exhibits the fruitful use of Facebook to conduct an online learning activity. As portrayed in the FGD result, Facebook is an interactive social media that enables users to create classroom and carry out online teaching activities. This result also affirms the conclusion of Naghdipour (2017) that Facebook could function as a learning environment to revamp EFL learners' motivation and assist their involvement in collaborative language learning activities. The result of this study further confirms the previous findings on the use of Facebook for language learning (Alias et al., 2012; Gatcho & Hajan, 2019; Slim & Hafedh, 2019).

The current study has some implications for teaching English as a foreign language both inside and outside classroom. First, by investigating EFL learners' perception and the way they experience digital learning activities of English, teachers can use the results of this study to design English activities and create higher levels of

engagement and foster EFL learners' autonomy. According to Xodabande (2018), the connection between autonomy and beyond classroom learning is sophisticated and related literature in this area proposes that the role of teachers is essential. In this regards, teachers' beliefs about the efficacy of English digital learning beyond classroom can affect EFL learners' productivity. If teachers are not well-enlightened with their students' activities beyond classroom, they may fail to take benefit of the knowledge and skills that their students bring to the classroom (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Moreover, limitations of inside classroom learning such as time restriction, limited teaching materials, lack of English teachers' proficiency, and a test-driven curriculum make learning activities restricted for EFL learners (Lau, 2017). In response to this fact, therefore, some advanced features offered by social networking sites and smartphones such as high resolution, internet connectivity through 3G, 4G, 5G, or Wi-Fi networks, larger capacity of memory cards, and other advancement enable EFL teachers to extend and bring language learning outside the classroom.

Second, EFL teachers can use the results of this study to teach some aspects of the language when there is not sufficient time during the classes such as teaching speaking skill and pronunciation. EFL learners need to have affective considerations in mind as some of them may require more effort and rehearsal before performing speaking. In this regards, digital learning of English by means social networking sites offers a great potential for out-of-class practices and a conducive environment for learners to develop their language skills such as speaking. In most EFL context, classroom is the only place where EFL learners are exposed to the foreign language, and materials produced by teachers are generally limited and restricted in some ways (Nugroho, 2019). By this regards, recent development of social networking sites and mobile learning should become new opportunities for teachers to direct EFL learners to practice their English outside classroom in a meaningful way. Drawing upon more proper models of language use, additionally, the use of social

Nugroho, A. & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital learning of English beyond classroom: EFL learners' perception and teaching activities.

networking sites prepares EFL learners to deal with real life challenges beyond the classroom more effectively (Xodabande, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Drawing on the findings and discussion, the present study reveals that Indonesian EFL learners positively perceived the digital learning activities of English beyond classroom. The learning activities could be conducted by means of available social networking sites, i.e. Youtube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Google Classroom. This study indicates that digital learning of English beyond classroom is applicable in social distancing measures such as in Surakarta, where internet resource is stable. Thus, future researches are suggested to examine the potential use of digital learning in disadvantage areas. Also, Online English learning activities from the view of EFL teachers coming from various different backgrounds should be examined to confirm the results of this study and to enrich the literature. The results of this study contribute to the realm of designing online English learning activities using accessible social networking sites.

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